

Message Text

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12

ACTION DLOS-07

INFO OCT-01 ARA-16 EUR-25 ISO-00 OIC-04 CG-00 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04

RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 FEA-02 CEQ-02

COA-02 COME-00 EB-11 EPA-04 IO-14 NSF-04 SCI-06

ACDA-19 AEC-11 AGR-20 DOTE-00 FMC-04 INT-08 JUSE-00

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5643

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C O N F I D E N T I A L NASSAU 1012

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR PFOR BF

SUBJ: LOS: BAHAMIAN OFFICIAL REVIEWS GCOB PREPARATIONS FOR
CARACAS CONFERENCE

1. IN RECENT CONVERSATION GEORGE STEWART, MINEXTAFF OFFICER CHARGED WITH STAFFING OUT LOS ISSUES, REVIEWED BAHAMIAN INTENTIONS WITH RESPECT TO SEVERAL LOS ITEMS. NEITHER EFFECTIVENESS OF STEWART'S ROLE IN SHAPING SUBSTANCE OF GCOB LOS POLICY NOR THE STATUS OF LOS PROPOSALS IN THE BAHAMIAN GOVERNMENT'S DECISION-MAKING PROCESS IS CLEAR. UNTIL WE GET A BETTER FIX ON BOTH OF THESE ASPECTS, AN OBJECTIVE WE CONTINUE TO PURSUE ACTIVELY, THE IMPORT OF STEWART'S STATEMENTS IS DIFFICULT TO MEASURE.

2. CRAWFISH: GCOB INTENDS TO DECLARE BAHAMIAN SPINY LOBSTER "CREATURE OF THE SHELF" BEFORE THE CARACAS CONFERENCE. PRECEDENT, OF COURSE, WILL BE US DECLARATION THAT AMERICAN LOBSTER IS "CREATURE OF THE SHELF". STEWART ADMITTED THAT US CONCEPT, CONFIDENTIAL

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WHICH PROMPTED THE FORTHCOMING BAHAMIAN DECLARATION ALONG

THE SAME LINES, TOOK AWAY MUCH OF THE ECONOMIC JUSTIFICATION FOR THE BAHAMIAN ARCHIPELAGO CONCEPT.

3. ARCHIPELAGO CONCEPT: GCOB BELIEVES IT MUST RESPOND TO POLITICAL PRESSURES FROM LOCAL FISHING COMMUNITIES, ESPECIALLY ON ABACO. GCOB INTENDS TO PASS LAW PUTTING ARCHIPELAGO PLAN INTO EFFECT BEFORE CARACAS CONFERENCE. STEWART SAID IT IS BEST TO PRESENT THE CONFERENCE WITH A FAIT ACCOMPLI ON ARCHIPELAGO. STEWART CLAIMED TO BE AUTHOR OF BILL NOW MOVING TOWARD CABINET APPROVAL. NOTE: BILL COULD NOT BE INTRODUCED IN HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY UNTIL JUN 19 AT EARLIEST. FINAL PASSAGE COULD WELL TAKE A MONTH. STEWART SAID BILL DEFINES WATERS WITHIN THE ARCHIPELAGO AS "ARCHIPELAGIC WATERS", DEFINITION OF WHICH IS HIS. WHEN IT WAS SUGGESTED TO STEWART THAT GCOB SHOULD SAVE ITS AIR FARE TO CARACAS IF IT INTENDS TO GO WITH NON-NEGOTIABLE POSITIONS, STEWART WAS QUICK TO EXPLAIN THAT BILL WOULD DESCRIBE GCOB ARCHIPELAGIC CLAIM INCLUDING DEFINITION OF STATUS OF WATERS, AND WOULD AUTHORIZE GOVERNMENT TO PUT CLAIM INTO EFFECT WHEN IT WAS DETERMINED IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST TO DO SO. STEWART SAID THIS COULD HAPPEN NOW OR "NOT FOR A HUNDRED YEARS" AND SUGGESTED THAT TIMING WOULD DEPEND ON WHICH GCOB OBJECTIVES ARE ACHIEVED AT LOS CONFERENCE. COMMENT: PROPOSAL FOR UNILATERAL MOVEMENT ON ARCHIPELAGOS NOW MAY REFLECT GCOB INSECURITY ABOUT ITS ABILITY TO WIN SUPPORT IN CARACAS. IT MAY ALSO BE SEIZED UPON AS A USEFUL DOMESTIC DEVICE FOR RALLYING BIPARTISAN SUPPORT BEHIND PINDLING.

4. DELIMITATION OF SHELF: WHEN STEWART INQUIRED ABOUT STATUS OF BAHAMIAN REQUEST FOR DISCUSSIONS WITH U.S. ON SHELF DELIMITATION (NASSAU 818), HE WAS INFORMED THAT EMBASSY DID NOT YET HAVE US RESPONSE, BUT WAS AWARE THAT MOST OF US ATTENTION TO THIS SUBJECT WAS BEING GIVEN TO FORTHCOMING TALKS WITH CANADIANS. STEWART REPLIED THAT IDEA THAT BAHAMIANS REQUEST SUCH TALKS WAS OF CANADIAN ORIGIN AND THAT ALAN BEESELY, CANADIAN LOS NEGOTIATOR, HAD INFORMED BAHAMIANS OF WHAT CANADIANS WERE DOING AND HAD SUGGESTED THAT BAHAMIANS ALSO PRESS U.S. ON THIS SUBJECT BEFORE THE CONFERENCE. (THIS PLACES REQUEST IN A LIGHT QUITE DIFFERENT FROM THAT PREVIOUSLY REPORTED BY EMBASSY, ALTHOUGH STEWART SAID BAHAMIANS ALSO WOULD BE INTERESTED IN SIMPLE EXERCISE TRACING 200 METER LINE OFF THE COAST

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OF THE BAHAMAS ONLY IN ORDER TO MAKE THEIR OWN MAPS ACCURATE.)

5. STEWART REPORTED THAT BEESLEY IS EXPECTED IN THE BAHAMAS BEFORE THE CONFERENCE AND THAT BEESELY WILL TRAVEL WITH BAHAMIAN DELEGATION TO CARACAS. SOURCE OF IDEA THAT IT IS SOUND TECHNIQUE FOR BAHAMAS TO GO TO CARACAS WITH ARCHIPELAGIC FAIT ACCOMPLI WAS GIVEN VARIOUSLY AS OAU, LATINS, AND BEESLEY.

6. EMBASSY IS, OF COURSE, PURSUING ALL OF THE ABOVE WITH STEWART AND OTHER BAHAMIAN OFFICIALS IN ORDER TO OBTAIN MORE INFORMATION. TO EXTENT THAT FURTHER INQUIRIES CONFIRM WHAT STEWART HAS SAID, EMBASSY WILL ATTEMPT TO DISSUADE GCOB FROM STEPS WHICH WILL NOT SERVE EITHER OUR MUTUAL LOS INTERESTS OR SOUND BILATERAL RELATIONS. CRAWFISH (SPINY LOBSTER) DECLARATION IS INEVITABLE (AND PRACTICALLY UNARGUABLE) IN VIEW OF US PRECEDENT, AS WE POINTED OUT IN NASSAU 1947, DEC 17, 1973.
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